

Constraints Related To The Implimentation Of The *Route Des Pêches* Tourism Project In Benin

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Abstract : In a bid to ensure harmonious development of its coast for tourism purposes, the Government of Benin has initiated along the *route des pêches*, a tourism project which is unfortunately experiencing some problems. This study aims to analyse the factors which are causing these problems. The methodology of the study includes literature review, field survey involving 285 people, data collection and processing. The SEPO model has been used to analyse the results. The study reveals that the project is hindered by three factors, namely an unstable legal and institutional framework, inadequate funding and a lack of political will. Actually, three project units, eight project officers and ten ministers were involved in project management at various stages. The Government allocated only 2.20% of total project fund, i.e. 0.61%, 0.29% and 1.31% to the three project units which took turn to manage it from 2001 to 2005, from 2005 to 2013 and from 2013 to 2016. Some private businesses were interested in funding the project but for 15 years the Government failed to make the land available to them. For this reason, the Government should devise a new project approach and create adequate conditions to implement it so that the coastal area can be developed in a sustainable manner in Benin.

Key Words: *Route des pêches*, project, tourist planning, political will

Date of Submission: 02-06-2018

Date of acceptance: 18-06-2018

I. INTRODUCTION

At the global level, tourism is one of the most prosperous economic sectors with an annual growth rate reaching 4 and 5% (OFDT/ARE, 2012, p. 9). According to the World Tourism Organisation (WTO), the number of tourists increased by 4.4% in 2015 reaching roughly 1.2 billion people. 2015 was the sixth consecutive year of growth above the average (KeroukioP, 2015, p.15). By 2020, the number of international tourists around the world will reach 1.561 million who will spend more than 2.000 billion euros (OMT, 1999, p.3). This upward trend which has been recorded for several years now despite various economic situations will continue till 2030 when international tourists will increase to 1.8 billion (OMT, 2015, p.2). While the percentage of tourists visiting Africa was 5% in 2010, it will reach 7% in 2030 (UNWTO, 2011, p.9).

People allege that for decades, tourism has been growing steadily and has become one of the economic sectors with the most rapid growth rate in the world because international tourism currently represents 7% of global exports of goods and services compared to 6% in 2014. Its growth rate was higher than that of global trade over the past four years. In many developing countries, tourism is the main export sector (OMT, 2016, p.2). Thus, tourism is one of the main sources of income in most developing countries and it is regarded as an important factor of economic progress and poverty alleviation (CNUCED, 2013, p.1). As indicated by Cazes G. (1972, p.93), tourism is a major asset and is most likely to become one of the most important growth factors for a number of countries that have an under developed economy but attractive weather conditions. The promotion of this asset requires political will, i. e. the commitment by stakeholders to undertake actions in order to achieve a series of goals and provide the means to implement these actions within a period of time (derick W B, 2011). This commitment is influenced by political power, which entails capacity and duty and includes political pressure as well as citizen's commitment, organising rules and a personal sense of civic duty (Malena C, 2009).

Thus, given that in Benin, tourism represents the second foreign currency provider next to cotton (FMI, 2011, p.61), the Government of Benin following the example of the governments of many developing countries where tourism is the main source of export ((ManhchienV, 2007, p.23) showed its political will by initiating in 2001 the *route des pêches*, a tourism project.

The *Route des pêches* is a term that is borrowed from a rural pathway. It refers to an area ranging from 06°18' to 06°22' northern latitude and from 02°00' to 02°24' longitude. It stretches from the Cotonou Commune in the East to Ouidah (in the West) through Abomey-Calavi. It is bordered in the south by the Atlantic Ocean and in the north by the northern bank of the coastal lagoon which goes from Lagos to Abidjan (**figure 1**). There are several bottlenecks in this tourism project, which this study aims to highlight.

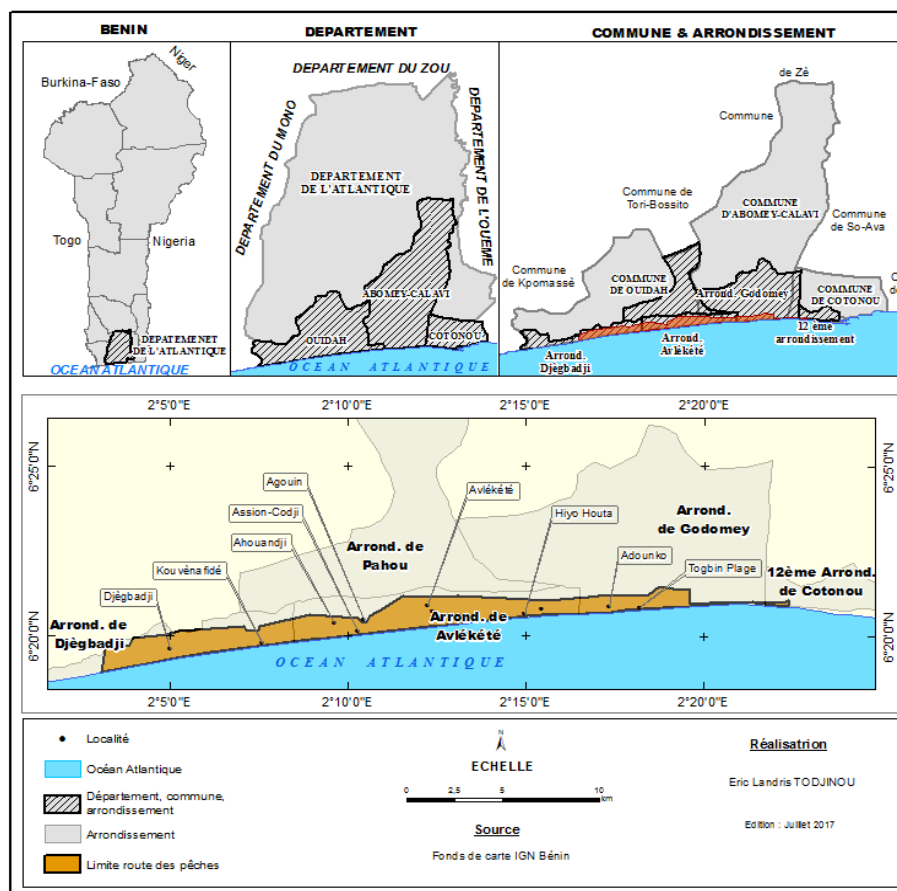


Figure 1 : Location of the study

II. MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

Several types of data made it possible to carry out this study. The historical data were collected from the former *route des pêches* Tourism Promotion Agency (ADTRP), which was set up by the government to run the project (Benin/PR, 2013), and during interviews conducted with resource persons. The financial data were extracted from the archives of the Ministry of Finance as well as the Ministry of Tourism and the former ADTRP. The rest of the data was collected directly in the field between January 2015 and July 2017 in the margin of formal and informal meetings held at the project headquarters and in the areas benefiting from the project.

*Target population

The people surveyed are scattered in seven project areas, i.e. Djègbadji, Avlékété, Hio, Adounko, Togbin, Fiyégnon I, Fiyégnon II.

*Criteria for determining the size of the population

A sampling method was used to determine the size of the population:

- Only one person was selected in each household ;
- Every single individual selected was a project area inhabitant ;
- Every person surveyed as a respondent was at least 15 years old in 2001.

*Size of the sample

The formula indicating the minimum size “n” of the sample is as follows: (Fellegi I, 2010, p.173):

$$n = \frac{t^2 p(1 - p)}{e^2}$$

e = the margin of error = 5%

p = proportion of the elements comprising the population = number of households/total population = 0,22

t = marginal quotient minus confidence rate «s» = 1-e. If s = 95%, t=1,96

Hence n= [(1.96)² * (0.22) (0.78)] / (0.05)²=263,68 rounded to 264 and this represents theoretically the sample.

The 264 people are spread in the seven project areas in accordance with a proportional rule, as shown in table I.

Table I : Spread of the sample population in the various areas

Area	Total population (number of households)	Population surveyed	Percentage
TOGBIN	3 815	115	3.01%
ADOUNKO	617	18	2.92%
AVLEKETE	536	16	2.99%
HIYO	488	15	3.07%
DJEGBADJI	275	8	2.91%
FIYEGNON I	1 531	46	3.00%
FIYEGNON II	1 518	46	3.03%
TOTAL	8 780	264	3.01%

Source : Field work, 2015.

Table I presents the total number of households (INSAE, 2016) and the number of people involved in the survey in every area. In total, 264 people, i.e. 3.06% of the total number of households (8.780) were consulted. In addition, there were resource persons, as shown in Table II.

Table II: Resource persons surveyed

Resource persons	Number
Project team members	07
Project board members	05
Members of other bodies related to the project	09
Total	21

Source : Field work, 2015.

Thus, 21 resource persons were surveyed, therefore the total number of samples rises to 285 people.

The materials used to collect the data in the field include a camera, a GPS Garmin 60, which was used to collect geographic information, and a computer DELL which was used to process the data and draft the document. The data collected is classified, grouped in tables or presented in the form of a graphic. The results were analysed using the SEPO model. This model made it possible to see the positive factors (success and potentials) as well as the negative factors (failures and obstacles) of PAZTRP.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

3.1.1 The PAZTPR achievements

The aim of the project was to implement by 2015 several tourism infrastructure projects (developing tourism attractions, creating or rehabilitating hotels, developing or renovating access roads to the tourism attractions and hotels), however the SEPO model of analysis revealed that no project goal was achieved (Table III).

Table III: Analysis of PAZTRP results using the SEPO model

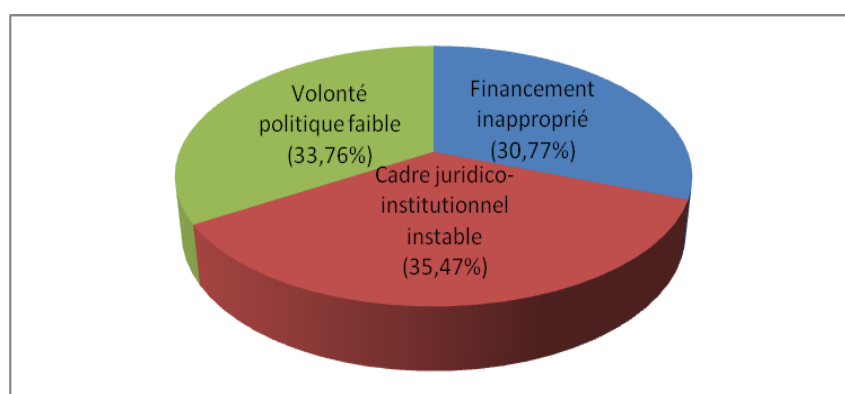
	PAST	FUTURE
POSITIVE	<p>SUCCESES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The status of the area has been formalised through the law on the <i>Route des pêches</i> special economic development area (ZDES-RP), the area has been declared public interest area, delineation, and boundary stones laid; -census of the local inhabitants (the census of the inhabitants has been taken and communication has been done on a compensation project) ; -A Concept paper on Area Development Plan has been prepared (the paper has been prepared and adopted in a cabinet meeting; this development plan has taken into account and built on previous studies) -The site development work has started. 	<p>POTENTIALS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -seaside resorts projects are planned in 2016-2021 PAG (Government Plan of Action) -Land compensation fund established at national level ; -Business people have shown interest in funding the implementation of the Plan ; -preliminary agreement by a partner to provide at least 50% of the funds needed to operationalise the Plan ; -Several donors are poised to fund the remaining portions.
NEGATIVE	<p>FAILURES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -No project objective was achieved (no tourism development) -The land problem has not been solved (local inhabitants have not been compensated, new houses have been built by new people, the draft decree related to the evaluation of the compensation has not been adopted) -The road work is seriously delayed 	<p>OBSTACLES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The land is not available -The conditions of project implementation are precarious -Lack of ownership of the Project Conceptual Plan by the government (governments do not unanimously approve the plan)

Source : Field work, 2017.

An analysis of this table reveals that since its inception, the project has had both positive and negative aspects. The project successes include the official status of the project area and the development of a project development plan. However, the fact that no project objectives have been achieved is due to several obstacles which slowed down the project progress. Indeed, the land is not available and the conditions of project implementation are precarious.

2.1.2- The conditions of project implementation

According to the people interviewed during the survey, the conditions of project implementation are characterised by three main factors (figure 2).



The three factors that characterise the PAZTRP project implementation are:

- Lack of political will : 33.76%
- Inadequate funding : 30.77%
- Unstable legal and institutional framework : 35.47%

Source : Local survey (2016)

2.1.2.1 The legal and institutional framework

The legal and institutional framework of the PAZTRP project was unstable due to the succession of project managers, ministers and steering committees (figure 3).

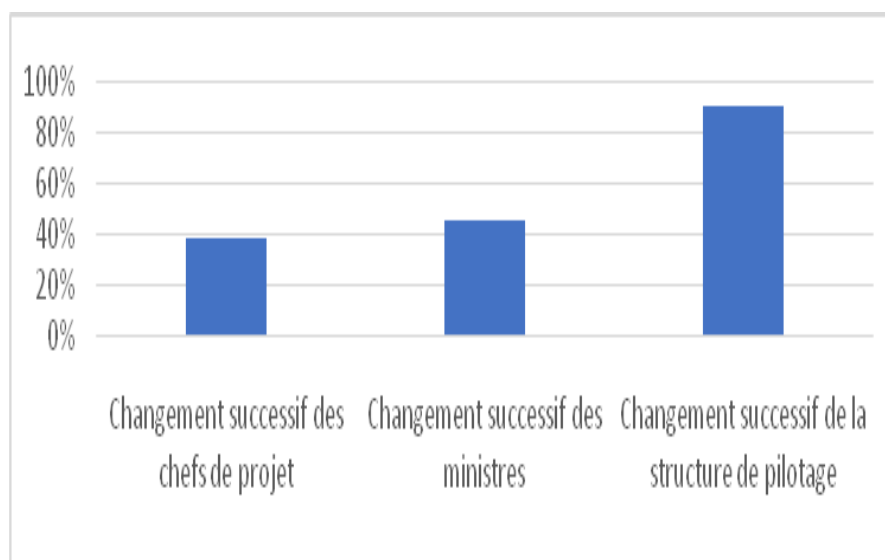
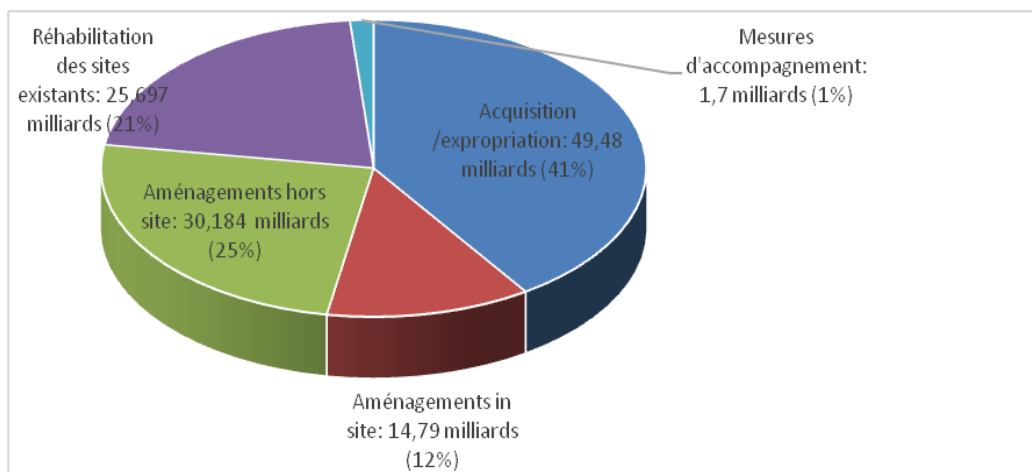


Figure 3: Manifestations of an unstable legal and institutional PAZTRP project framework
Source : Local survey (2016)

An analysis of this figure reveals that the succession of project steering committees is, according to 90% of the people surveyed, the first manifestation of the instability of the legal and institutional framework of the PAZTRP project, while the successive ministers and project managers are cited by 45% and 38% of the people as the manifestations of instability. Indeed, for 15 years of project existence, there were ten ministers in charge of the project, eight project managers and five project steering committees. Each minister in charge of the project spent between less than six months and three and half years. In fact, the project is drawn up in a way that enables a minister to change the project manager at will. Because of this, the project manager often finds it difficult to carry out activities if he does not have a harmonious relationship with the minister or if the minister is not the one who has appointed him. In this context, the long lasting project manager has spent five years as CEO but he has worked under several ministers apart from the one who has appointed him. He did not have a harmonious relationship with all of them, that's why there were few project achievements compared to all the time spent. The succession of ministers, managers and steering committees in charge of project management was responsible for an unstable legal and institutional project framework as well as inconsistent actions and inadequate funding.

2.1.2.2 Inadequate funding

The project design made a room for public and private partnership in which the government with its public power should secure the whole project land (through acquisition and numbering) and provide public services off site (i.e. road and telephone networks, electricity supply, safe drinking water supply and sanitation). Given the role assigned to the government, its initial investment estimated at 131.191 billion CFA can be broken down as shown in figure 4:



Rehabilitation of existing sites: 25,697 billion (21%)
 Off site development: 30,184 billion (25%)
 Acquisition/expropriation: 49,48 billion (41%)
 Other measures: 1,7 billion (1%)

Figure 4: Breakdown of initial PAZTRP project investment needs
Source : ADTRP Archives Data (2016)

This graph shows that the land, which should have been available in 2005, has considerable importance (53% for acquisition/expropriation and on site development) and is exclusively the responsibility of the government just like the total initial investment. However, during the whole project period, only 2.888.310.113 CFA, i.e. 2,2% of the expected amount and 4,5% of the land price was raised. This amount can be broken down into three periods as indicated in figure 5.

Amount

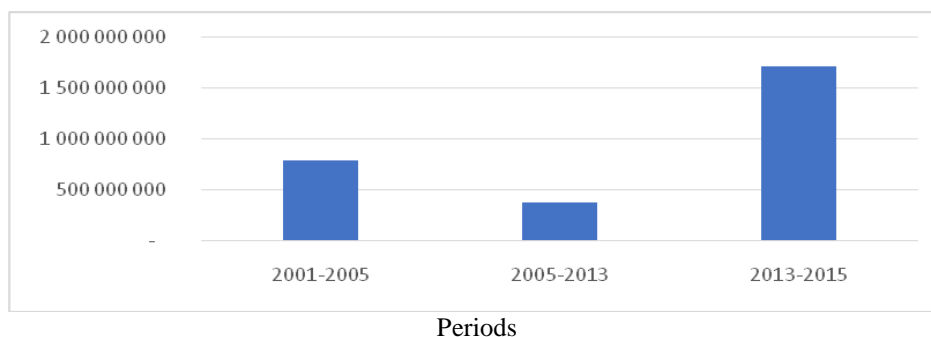


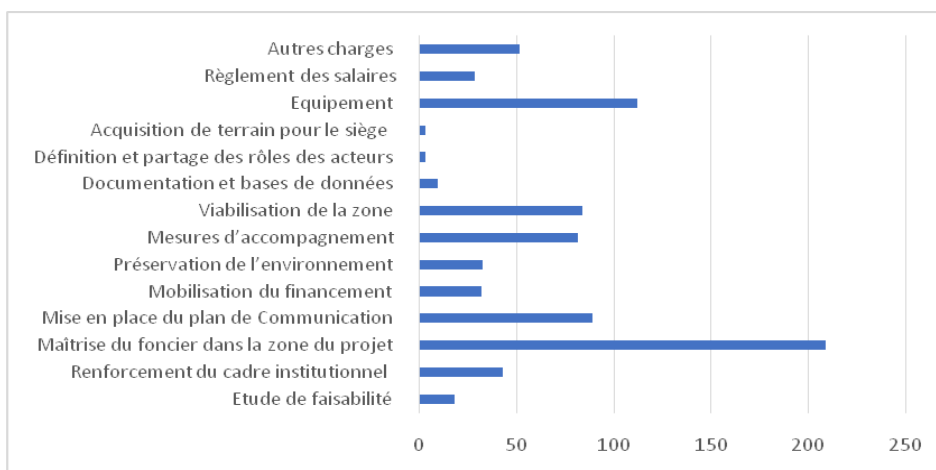
Figure 5: Funding of PAZTRP between 2001 and 2016
Source : ADTRP and DGTCP/RGF (2016) archives data

This graph shows that the lowest funding was provided during the longest period (2005-2013) and the most substantial financial contribution was made during the shortest period (2013-2015). From 2005 to 2013, the project was run by a project committee called Implementing Unit of the *Route des pêches* Tourism Development Project (CE-PDTRP), while from 2014 to 2015 the project was run by a steering committee called ADTRP. It is clear that the funding of the project also depends on the institutional framework. However, every period is peculiar.

a- Funding from 2001 to 2005

The expenses incurred within the framework of the project until 2005 amount to 793 million CFA francs, i.e. 0,61% of the 131,191 billion expected from the government at the inception of the project. The various project areas are indicated in figure 6.

Items



Amount in millions CFA francs

Figure 6:

- Other charges :
- Payment of salaries
- Equipment
- Acquisition of land for the project headquarters
- Description and assignment of roles to various stakeholders
- Documentation and databases
- Provision of land services
- Other measures
- Environmental protection
- Fund raising
- Adoption of a communication plan
- Securing land in the project area
- Strengthening the institutional framework
- Feasibility study

Figure 6: Breakdown of the PAZTRP expenditure between 2001 and 2005

Source: ADTRP (2016) Archive Data

The figure shows many activities. The project priority was the securing of the land (through acquisition or expropriation) and provision of land services. Given that expropriation became the option when it was indicated that the land was a public interest area, all related activities should have been carried out instead of undertaking activities in many areas. It is true that the highest expenditure is the one related to land securing (208,49 million) but no concrete result has been achieved because the project should have made land available to investors from 2005 and acquisition or expropriation was estimated at 49,48 billion. Therefore, though they are the highest, land related expenses only represent 0.42% of the sum needed in this area.

b- Funding from 2005 to 2013

When CE-PDTRP was created, an account was opened in the name of the project at the treasury house. The annual bank statements of the accounts are as follows: see figure 7.

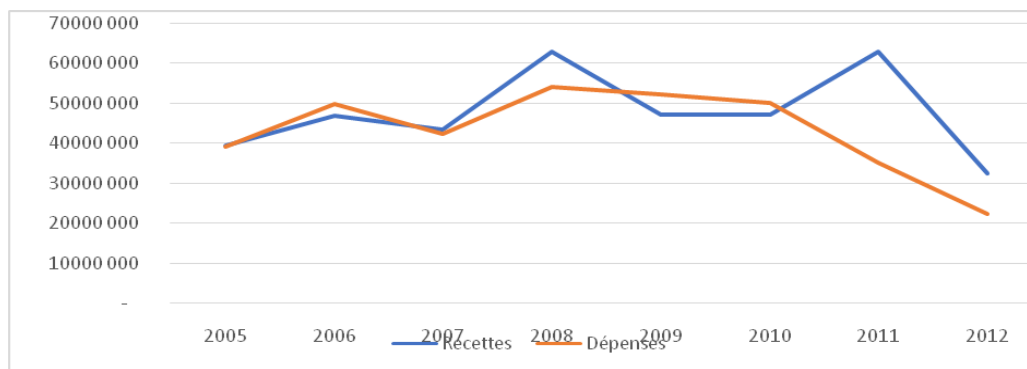


Figure 7: Funding of PAZTRP from 2005 to 2012
Source: ADTRP Archives Data (2016)

The decree creating CE-PDTRP indicates that this unit enjoys operational and managerial autonomy but it has not mentioned the resources it should manage, who should fund it and how much should be allocated. As a result, the project was run like an administrative unit whose funding depended on the political and financial circumstances of the ministry in charge. The funds allocated to it during a period of eight years were 0,8% of the funding that was required to acquire the lands; it was the equivalent of 0,29% of the total amount expected from the government. In fact, the expenditure incurred served mostly for the CE-PDTRP operations.

c- The funding from 2013 to July 2016

From 2013 to 2016, the funding is a bit specific. Indeed, the 2013 budget is just like that of 2012 because ADTRP was created in 2013, so the 2013 funding corresponds in practice to that of CE-PDTRP in 2012. From 2014, things began to change since one billion francs was raised in the frame of land expropriation but in 2015, the funding decreased instead of increasing.

In 2016, no funding was received because of the change of government, on the one hand, and the dissolution of ADTRP by the new government, on the other hand. That's why the graph indicating the funding received has not taken into account the year 2016. Nethertheless, the funding received during the period was 1.31%, i.e. more than four times the funding received during the CE-PDTRP period which is twice longer. This prompts us to assume that an autonomous management would be more credible than the project steering unit.

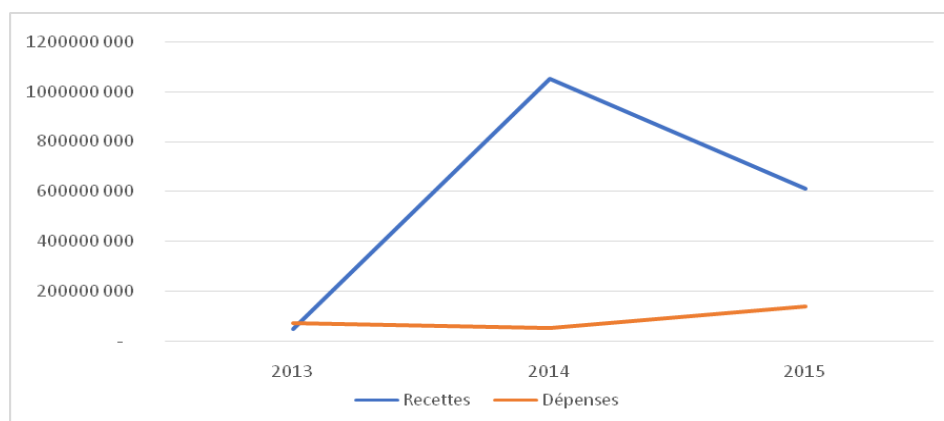


Figure 8: Funding of PAZTRP from 2013 to 2015
Source : ADTRP (2016) Archive Data

The dichotomy between the income and the expenditure in 2014 was due to the fact that the land expropriation exercise was not carried out although the funds were raised for this purpose. As a matter of fact, the unit costs of the plots, which should serve as a basis for negotiations between the project and landowners, were communicated to the government during a cabinet meeting but they were not adopted.

During the same period, there was inadequate funding.

The inadequate funding as well as the inadequate legal and institutional framework and the dissolution of ADTRP in 2016 in the absence of any prior evaluation of the project casts doubt on the quality of political will in the context of the development of the *route des pêches* for tourism purposes.

2.1.2.3 Political will and other factors

The lack of political will, which was evoked by more than one third of the surveyed people, was also evoked by all the resource persons as a factor hindering the progress of the project. Strong political will is also needed to address other aspects such as the lack of communication, administrative bottlenecks and other hidden agendas.

Table XIV shows some acts that illustrate the lack of political will and contribute to render the project less visible.

Table IV: Illustration of the lack of political will affecting PAZTRP

N°	Items	Observations
1	In 2005, two parallel units were created to run the same project (namely an agency with a Managing Director and a project coordinating team under the supervision of the ministry of tourism - programmes and prospection section)	These two institutions in charge of the project were detrimental to it and their missions were conflicting; administrative bottlenecks were deliberately put in place.
2	A project management unit was favoured more than an autonomous agency with a board of directors and a Managing Director whose mandate would be renewed only if project performance is satisfactory.	Investors were reluctant to commit themselves in a sustainable manner because according to them and to the feasibility study, an autonomous agency was needed.
3	The project lacked funding	It was not possible to take any major actions, and there was no land.
4	An ad hoc commission was set up to address the land problem but it lacked political and financial support	The land was not made available in time because the ad hoc commission worked for more than six years instead of seven months.
5	No sanctions were meted out when it became obvious that part of the project area was illegally occupied.	The land was not available at all.
6	The bill on attribution, organisation and operations of ZDES-RP created by Act N°2014-25 on 23/12/2014 as part of the 2015 budget has not been adopted.	This bill was drafted to guide the occupation of the land. The fact that it has not been adopted is a way of hesitating or refusing to solve land problems.
7	No terms of reference or partnership agreement between the government and MacauLegend Development Company Limited (of Mr David CHOW) was signed	The partnership agreement would enable the group to provide half of the project funding and the TOR would enable it to raise the rest of the funds. No official reason was given to explain why the partnership agreement was not signed though it was on this basis that the group was ordered to carry out the PCDA that was adopted in a cabinet meeting.
8	The Cabinet meeting has not adopted the report tabled several times by the compensation commission.	The land problem was a hindrance
9	Lack of funding for ADTRP	According to Article 26 of the decree on the creation and operations of ADTRP, the agency enjoys an initial subsidy of five hundred million (500.000.000) francs. This money has never been given to the project. As a result, the agency could not take any further actions.
10	ADTRP was dissolved in the absence of any prior evaluation.	This action gives the impression that somebody wanted to stop the project no matter how sustainable it was, alternatively somebody wanted

		to dictate to the project by creating another unit which attached no importance to the project.
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Source : ADTRP (2016)

In a nutshell, the kind of political will which prevailed at the inception of the project and at some crucial moments has not been sustained. The lack of political will is responsible for several problems, including the continuing land problems and the lack of adequate project funding.

IV. DISCUSSIONS

To achieve significant results, any tourism project needs the commitment and motivation of the stakeholders (Samake B, 2009 p.31). This remark, which was made during the final evaluation of a tourism and archeological project (*projet de promotion du Tourisme et de Conservation des sites Touristiques et Archéologiques*) in Sangha, Mali, is valid for PAZTRP as well. Indeed, the project suffered from a lack of commitment and motivation of its major stakeholder, i.e. the central government, which prevented it from undertaking relevant actions. In fact, to achieve the goals of a development project, it is necessary to emphasise processes and not to stick to inputs (DANIDA/AFD, 2012, p. 141). This statement confirms this study because PAZTRP has not only suffered from a lack of process but it has also lacked adequate inputs. Given that tourism investment projects require generally a huge capital because of the high cost of infrastructure and equipment, the government is the one that plays the most important role (Vlès, 1996, p.151). The infrastructure and equipment require long term capitals because of low depreciation rates.

Given that the government of Benin has not properly played its role, PAZTRP can therefore be compared to some extent to the capacity building project for sustainable land management and the fight against desertification in Guinea Bissau. This project failed to yield significant results and to have an impact because of a number of constraints it experienced, namely a lack of government leadership, poor administrative procedures, inadequate national ownership and a lack of local capacity (Soubeiga et Lopes, 2013, p.43).

V. CONCLUSION

Considering the project achievements and objectives, it is possible to say that 15 years after its inception, PAZTRP has failed. However, this remark should not be made bluntly if the project achievements and conditions of implementation are taken into account. In fact, the project did not mature before its implementation started. Especially project feasibility was not clearly vindicated when a unit was set up to implement it.

Given that there was no adequate funding and no land at the inception of this tourism project, which is being promoted by the government, strong political will should be sustained. Unfortunately this has not been the case of this project which has no investment plan. The legal and institutional framework of the project is unstable and project decisions are not in line with its objectives.

Political decision makers need to take these factors into account if there is still a need to improve the coastal area in Benin. In this area which is protected by the RAMSAR Convention and where the demographic pressure is strong, it is important to address the issue of land occupation in general and, especially, the lands that are reserved for tourism purposes. In this regard and with a public/private partnership approach, it will be opportune to adopt a decree to ease the implementation of the Act on the *route des pêches* special economic development zone.

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Lambert K. Ayitchehou." Constraints Related To The Implimentation Of The Route Des Peches Tourism Project In Benin." IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR- JHSS). vol. 23 no. 06, 2018, pp. 27-37.